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EN121

1 December 2021

### Project 3

The beauty industry seems shallow from most perspectives. People pay so much money to improve their outside appearance. It is something a lot of people participate in and we see in everyday life. Additionally, I have a lot of experience and insight into this industry. I have worked and studied within it for three years now. I attended cosmetology school throughout my junior and senior years of high school. I worked at one hair salon in my hometown for two years straight and now I work in a new tanning and hair salon in the city. Despite its outer appearance, there is a lot behind it, including lots of hard work and dedication.

I have met various hairdressers and makeup artists who make their living off of getting in as many clients as possible and working nonstop. It is a fast-paced industry despite what people may think. It is evident that “in a society valuing youth, health, aesthetics, and well-being, cosmetic skin or hair care products have gained huge popularity. Recent research confirms that consumers from all countries and cultures also have strong attitudes toward physical appearance” (Beresniak). The beauty industry is an ever-growing field. People constantly will want to look and feel better. There are also a lot of aspects in the industry that are not noticed. There are long days on your feet and only getting 3 minutes to sneak off and eat lunch in between clients. It requires a lot of hard work and dedication. You also must stay creative and continue to keep up with trends to please your clients who also want to look the top best.

The satisfaction of being able to make others feel beautiful is a shared feeling among beauty professionals. Performing your work on a client and seeing their face light up in the mirror is an amazing feeling. I work with a few hairdressers and spray tanning technicians. The most common thing I hear from these people I work with is how they basically also have jobs as “therapists”. We listen to clients gossip, complain, rant, and just talk for hours on end. Many times the stylist is offering advice or support. They love to help others not only look but also feel their best. In one article that examines the hair salon workplace, it was found that “making a client ‘feel better’ about themselves can be a source of job satisfaction and emotional well being among hair stylists” (Hill 56). My coworker Donnie personally loves to just make everyone laugh. He shows his whole personality while working and connects really well with his clients. By doing so, it lifts the spirits of everyone in the salon and can make a really positive environment.

I decided to ask my coworker Donnie Capa, who works with me at Portofino Beauty, a few questions to get his insight on working in the industry.

Q: “How long have you been working in the cosmetology industry?”

A: “I have been working in the field as a senior stylist for 22 years. Prior to that, I attended cosmetology school for 2 and worked as an assistant and junior stylist for 4 years. The whole time, I have worked with this same team we have here.”

Q: “What are some challenges you face as a hairdresser working with very high maintenance clients?”

A: “It can be very hard to make them happy all the time, and that’s something you need to accept as a beauty professional. You have to be willing to compromise and give in to what they want. After all, they’re the ones paying us. I think sometimes we have to deal with the “bratty” attitude

type of people, but I've learned to deal with it and really appreciate those clients who appreciate us.”

Q: “What do you enjoy about working in the industry?”

A: “I love the thrill of creating. I always wanted to be some type of artist but I love having an actual person as a canvas. I use their hair and face as a place to use my skills and creativity. I also love the personal aspect of it. I meet amazing people and get to talk with them all day. I love making people laugh. When everyone in the salon, including the clients, are talking and laughing and enjoying themselves it's a great day.”

Q: “What are your opinions on more serious cosmetic services, like procedures?”

A: “Personally, I've never done anything further than makeup, nails, and hair. But I see nothing wrong with it. Actually, maybe in extreme cases. Like I've seen those people on social media who try to transform themselves into Barbie dolls and it's scary. There's nothing wrong with trying to look better, whether it's lip injections or a breast augmentation, but people need to remember who they actually are on the inside.”

It is also important to look at the field of beauty as a whole, and its deeper meanings. A lot of aspects in cosmetology can also be attributed to self confidence. Many people do receive these services as a way to feel better about themselves. Is it shallow or is there a deeper meaning to it? “As cosmetic products help enhance our appearance, they thus improve our self-perception, the way we relate to others, and as such, our quality of life. Cosmetic care can improve well-being, self-esteem, and social relations" (Beresniak). These are all parts of overall health, therefore this implies cosmetic services to our appearances can really make us feel better and healthier.

Personally, I feel there is a thin line between just trying to look and feel your best and completely wanting to change yourself. The beauty industry preys on insecurity and self doubt. If you get your hair colored and a good facial, your life will improve. Quickly this turns into surgical procedures until someone transforms into a new person. I have seen it first hand many times in this line of work. People can become unrecognizable and beautiful in different ways, but still lack self confidence and inner happiness. Upon looking deeper into it, it becomes noticeable that these services can be a concern for people with “a preoccupation with a perceived defect in physical appearance [which] commonly occurs in body image disorders, such as eating disorders and body dysmorphic disorder” (Pikoos). Recently, It is additionally found these “individuals with high dysmorphic concern displayed higher negative emotionality, greater distress regarding the closure of beauty services due to COVID-19 restrictions, and increased desire to obtain future beauty or cosmetic treatments” (Pikoos). These clients are so used to keeping up with their outward appearance that when salons and such were closed, they fell into distress. This can be looked at in two ways - those who simply want to look put-together and just want to keep up with their looks, and those who need to change themselves and are completely distraught without being able to do so. It is a tricky subject between improving one’s appearance and their inner self doubt or insecurities. I think we should look at it as there is nothing wrong with making alterations to your appearance as long as you are truly happy and confident. People should not just use these cosmetic services as a way to hide behind self consciousness.

Cosmetics have had a long history of representation of status and/or wealth. In earlier times of history, certain products were only available and worn by people of high status. Perhaps this can still relate today, as we see celebrities with unattainable beauty standards, created by insanely expensive procedures and products. Beauty standards have always been controversial.

Usually they are focused on something only a few actually possess, and therefore others work so hard to get to.

The beauty industry often connects and intertwines with other industries, like entertainment. People look up to celebrities and the way they look. Marlis Schweitzer, in a paper about the “mad search for beauty, says that “building on the public’s fascination with the stage, these manufacturers emphasized the artificial processes that transformed actresses from attractive women into exceptional beauties and implied that their products could do the same for every woman” (Schweitzer 1). Essentially, the people that work in the cosmetics industry want to make common people believe that their products can turn them into someone beautiful, like an actress. We see this a lot in advertisements all the time. An example of this is Gigi Hadid being an ambassador for Covergirl. Millions of people will see this and think, “if such a famous model uses Covergirl products, maybe these products will make me just as beautiful!” Then again, the beauty industry is preying on people’s insecurities, and truly nobody needs any products to look beautiful as themselves.

The beauty industry as a whole is very widespread. Almost everybody participates in it in one way or another. It contains elements of hard work, high standards, and satisfaction. There are some issues in the way people take advantage of the industry because of their dysmorphic views of themselves. However, the beauty industry will always be around to help people feel beautiful.

## Works Cited

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